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SUBJECT: SOUTH SULAWESI: JUSUF KALLA PICKS HIS GUBERNATORIAL  
CANDIDATE, BUT WILL THE VOTERS LISTEN?

REF: SURABAYA 39

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protect accordingly.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On October 15, Vice President and Golkar  
National Chairman Jusuf Kalla strongly urged Golkar elites in  
South Sulawesi to support incumbent Amin Syam and his running  
mate Mansyur Ramly in the November 5 gubernatorial elections.  
Public reaction has been negative, suggesting that the public  
may not be inclined to follow instructions in the first direct  
gubernatorial elections in South Sulawesi. Local observers  
commented to us that Kalla will use all of the tools at his  
disposal to get his choice elected in what is really an  
experiment in party mobilization before the 2009 presidential  
election. End Summary.

NEPOTISM OR CAPABILITIES?

¶2. (U) According to local Makassar daily Fajar (a Jawa Pos  
company), Vice President Jusuf Kalla told local Golkar cadres to  
vote for incumbent Amin Syam in the November 5 gubernatorial  
election. In a closed door meeting with Golkar elites on  
October 15, Golkar Party National Chairman Kalla reportedly  
urged participants not to have any doubts about Golkar's  
candidates, noting that his brother-in-law Mansyur Ramly was  
Amin Syam's running mate. Kalla reportedly told the audience  
made up of regents and mayors from throughout South Sulawesi  
that he had already instructed his companies Kalla Group and  
Bosowa Group to help Amin Syam and Mansyur Ramly win the  
election.

¶3. (SBU) Reaction to Kalla's reported instructions to "vote for  
Amin Syam" were greeted with dismay by readers of Fajar online,  
who expressed disappointment about Kalla's decision to take  
sides in the gubernatorial election. They complained that he was  
being neither neutral nor democratic. Hasbi Abdulla, Director  
of the Legal Aid Institute (LBH), told the Consulate that his  
informal poll of the "grass roots" suggested that the population  
was most disturbed by Kalla's statements urging members to vote  
for a family member. Kalla was perceived as supporting these  
candidates because of nepotism, not because of capability or  
personality.

EXPERIMENTATION WITH DIRECT ELECTIONS

14. (SBU) Sukriansyah, Editor of Fajar, told Consulate Surabaya that the public has long known that Kalla firmly supported Amin Syam and Mansur Ramly and would use his economic "power" to insure his choice wins. He observed, however, that Kalla's support may be less influential in this first direct election. Sukriansyah explained that Kalla understand the realities of a direct election where parties have less influence and thus had no choice but to publicly support Amin Syam. According to Sukriansyah, Kalla will go all out to ensure victory for Amin Syam as an "experiment" on how to mobilize Golkar voters to support his own potential candidacy for president in 2009.

15. (SBU) Hasbi Abdulla agreed with Sukriansyah's assessment of the uncertainties surrounding a direct election. He said, "People are smarter than before. They might vote for anybody they like despite the fact that political elites have directed them to vote a certain way." Pointing to the 2004 presidential election as illustrative, Hasbi observed that President Yudhoyono was an unknown politician from a small, new political party, and the people voted for him.

BUGIS VOTE  
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16. (SBU) Hasbi suggested that Kalla will also try to draw on his Bugis ethnicity to persuade voters to select Amin Syam. Both Kalla and Amin Syam are considered "real" Bugis, as compared with "Bugis Makassar." In contrast, Amin Syam's most formidable competition Syahrul Yasin Limpo, the current vice governor, is a Bugis Makassar. His running mate, Agus Arifin Nu'man, is a real Bugis.

17. (SBU) Kalla's recent statements that there would be an "all Golkar final" in the gubernatorial election reflects the fact that Amin Syam, Syahrul Yasin Limpo, and Agus Arifin Nu'man are all current or previous Golkar cadres and still support Golkar ideology (see reftel). From Hasbi Abdulla's perspective, Syahrul's biggest competition for the governor's office is not

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Amin Syam, but Jusuf Kalla.  
MCCLELLAND